1:Franken et al M, G-5 (ca. 1913-1958) 1960
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Chapter One

BALI: SOME GENERAL INFORMATION

I

The Balinese Landscape

The island of Bali lies due east of Java, separated only by a narrow strait. Its total area is somewhat more than two thousand square miles. [131]

The westernmost district of Bali, Jĕmbrana, was in earlier times fairly isolated from the central part of the island. It had many more contacts with the extreme east of Java, to the west overseas, than with the rest of Bali, to the east overland. An indication of its isolation is the fact that it did not contribute to the cost of maintaining Bali's chief temple, Pura Bĕsakih.[1] This isolation was brought to an end in the twentieth century with the construction of a road along the south coast. Moreover, beginning in the 'thirties many Balinese transmigrated to Jĕmbrana to help in opening up the land there, and that, too, has tended to strengthen the bonds with the central part of the island. Ethnically and religiously Jĕmbrana is the least homogeneous of all the regions of Bali (see Table 4 below). [101]

The main part of the island – central Bali, as the Balinese themselves call it – is the densely populated territory which slopes from the island's high mountain range down towards the south. Cut through by many river valleys running from north to south, it is a fertile *sawah* region. The mountain range runs from the west *via* Gunung Batu Kau ('the coconut-shell mountain', 7,462 feet), and the central highland and lake country with Gunung Batur (5,630 feet, a volcano which has wrought great destruction on the island at various times, notably in 1917 and 1927), to Gunung Agung ('the great mountain', 10,302 feet),

[P. 31 [no textual materials on p.2]

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
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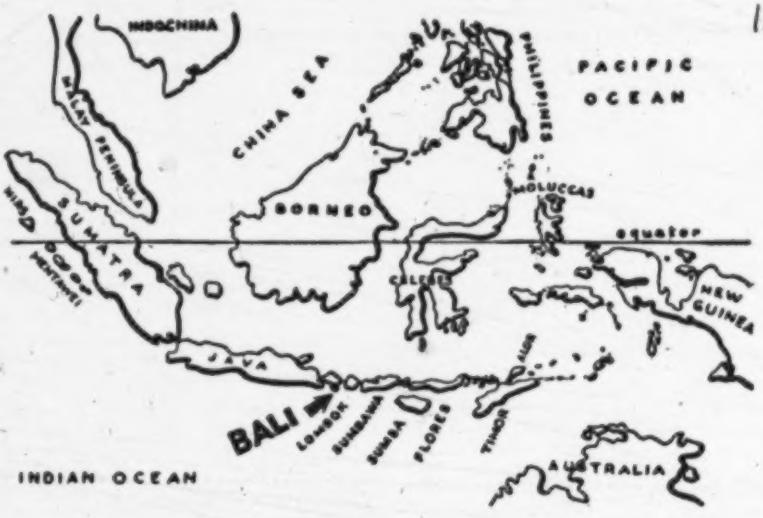

THE ISLAND

THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO lies directly on the volcanic belt of the world. Like the backbone of some restless, formidable antediluvian monster, more than three hundred volcanoes rise from the sea in a great chain of islands — perhaps all that remains of a continent broken up in prehistoric cataclysms — forming a continuous land bridge that links Asia with Australia. Because of its peculiar and fantastic nature, its complex variety of peoples, and its fabulous richness, the archipelago is one of the most fascinating regions of the earth. It includes famous islands like Java, Borneo, Sumatra, New Guinea, the Philippines, and the hysterical island-volcano of Krakatao. Such freaks of nature as the giant "dragon" lizards of Komodo, the coloured lakes of Flores, the

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2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
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orangutans, the rafflesia (a flower over three feet in diameter), and the birds of paradise, are to be found nowhere else. The population of the islands ranges from such forms of primitive humanity as the Negritos, the Papuans, the Kubus, who seem only a few steps away in the evolutionary scale from the orangutan, to the supercivilized Hindu-Javanese, who over six hundred years ago built monuments like Borobudur and Prambanan, jewels of Eastern art.

Through the centuries, civilization upon civilization from all directions has settled on the islands over the ancient megalithic cultures of the aborigines, until each island has developed an individual character, with a colourful culture, according to whether Chinese, Hindu, Malay, Polynesian, Mohammedan, or European influence has prevailed. Despite the mental isolation these differences have created, even the natives believe that the islands once formed a unified land. Raffles, in his *History of Java*, mentions a Javanese legend that says "the continent was split into nine parts, but when three thousand rainy seasons will have elapsed, the Eastern Islands shall again be reunited and the power of the white man shall end."

One of the smallest, but perhaps the most extraordinary, of the islands, is the recently famous Bali — a cluster of high volcanoes, their craters studded with serene lakes set in dark forests filled with screaming monkeys. The long green slopes of the volcanoes, deeply furrowed by ravines washed out by rushing rivers full of rapids and waterfalls, drop steadily to the sea without forming lowlands. Just eight degrees south of the Equator, Bali has over two thousand square miles of extravagantly fertile lands, most of which are beautifully cultivated. Only a narrow strait, hardly two miles across, separates Bali from Java; here again the idea that the two islands were once joined and then separated is sustained by the legend of the great Javanese king who was obliged to banish his good-for-nothing son to Bali, then united to Java by a very narrow isthmus. The king accompanied his

9:Geertz E-5 (1957-1958) 1959 OF7 Bali OF7

Form and Variation in Balinese Village Structure

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AS ALL things Balinese, Balinese villages are peculiar, complicated, and extraordinarily diverse. There is no simple uniformity of social structure to be found over the whole of the small, crowded countryside, no straightforward form of village organization easily pictured in terms of single typological construction, no "average" village, a description of which may well stand for the whole. Rather, there is a set of marvelously complex social systems, no one of which is quite like any other, no one of which fails to show some marked peculiarity of form. Even contiguous villages may be quite differently organized; formal elements—such as caste or kinship—of central importance in one village may be of marginal significance in another; and each of the twenty-five or so villages sampled in the Tabanan and Klungkung regions of south Bali in 1957—a total area of only some 450 square miles—showed important structural features in some sense idiosyncratic with respect to the others. Neither simplicity nor uniformity are Balinese virtues.

Yet all these small-scale social systems are clearly of a family. They represent variations, however intricate, on a common set of organizational themes, so that what is constant in Balinese village structure is the set of components out of which it is constructed, not the structure itself. These components are in themselves discrete, more or less independent of one another: the Balinese village is in no sense a corporate territorial unit coordinating all aspects of life in terms of residence and land ownership, as peasant villages have commonly been described, but it is rather a compound of social structures, each based on a different principle of social affiliation and adjusted to one another only insofar as seems essential. It is this multiple, composite nature of Balinese village structure which makes possible its high degree of variation while maintaining a general formal type, for the play between the several discrete structural forms is great enough to allow a wide range of choice as to the mode of their integration with one another in any particular instance. Like so many organic compounds composed of the same molecules arranged in different configurations, Balinese villages display a wide variation in structure on the basis of a set of invariant fundamental ingredients.

Perhaps the best systematic formulation of this type of village structure is to conceptualize it in terms of the intersection of theoretically separable planes of social organization. Each such plane consists of a set of social institutions based on a wholly different principle of affiliation, a different manner of grouping individuals or keeping them apart. In any particular village all important planes will be present, but the way in which they are adjusted to one another, the way in which they intersect, will differ, for there is no clear princi-

[see pp. 1011-1012, category 116, for footnotes; Analyst]

9:Geertz E-5 (1957-1958) 1959 OF7 Bali OF7

though he may have some traditional status in the particular hamlet within the perbekelan of which he himself happens to be a member, he is unlikely to have much in the others.

As the Indonesian state increases its activities in an attempt to bring the country into the modern world, the Perbekel both becomes more and more important and feels more and more keenly the uncertain nature of his position. The degree to which he is able to assert his role, to secure his dominance over traditional leadership in matters concerning the national state, and to make a true political unit of the perbekelan varies with several factors: whether or not he is energetic and intelligent, whether or not he is the descendent of a traditional local ruling family, whether or not his perbekelan happens to include hamlets having long-term bonds with one another, whether or not there are a number of young, educated men who will support and encourage his "modernization" efforts, and so on. As with the other planes described, the role of the *perbekelan* unit in rural Balinese social structure is not describable in terms of any static typological construct, but can only be seen as ranging over a certain set of organizational possibilities.

THREE BALINESE VILLAGES

Thus far in the analysis of Balinese rural social structure the concept "village" has been studiously avoided, mainly because it is used by the Balinese in several mutually contradictory ways. Sometimes "village" (*desa*, a Sanskrit loanword) is used as a synonym for bandjar (the basic rural political unit); sometimes to refer to the Kahyangan-Tiga (temple congregation); sometimes, especially by urbanites and government officials, to the region under a single Perbekel; and, perhaps most commonly, for a vaguely demarcated region in which the planes of organization intersect in such a way that the people living within the region have rather more ties with one another than they do with people in adjacent regions. In this last and rather fuzzy sense, "village" refers to the integrative as opposed to the analytic aspects of rural social structure, and it is in this sense that the term will be used here. A village is not a hamlet, a temple group, or a perbekelan, but a concrete example of the intersection of the various planes of social organization in a given, only broadly delimited locality.

1. *Njalian.* In pre-Dutch times the seat of a minor lord and a secondary market center, Njalian lies at the western edge of the former kingdom and present regency of Klungkung, and is one of the more complexly organized villages of Bali. In Njalian virtually nothing is coordinate with anything else and the crisscrossing of loyalties reaches an almost unbelievable degree of intricacy. The perbekelan of Njalian—the present Perbekel is the head of the traditional ruling house, a *Tjokorda* by title—contains the rather large number of about 3,000 kitchens distributed among eight hamlets, six contiguous within one large settlement cluster and two spatially isolated some two or three kilometers away. There are four sets of Kahyangan-Tiga temples. To one set belong the members of four of the contiguous hamlets, to a second set belong

9:Geertz E-5 (1957-1958) 1959 OF7 Bali OF7

forms but one patus, "c" two, and so on. Thus a man may well have his hamlet alliance in one place (not even necessarily where he lives), his temple ties in a second, and his cremation obligations in yet a third, though of course in a majority of cases some of these affiliations may be merged.

Since Njalian contains representatives of a wide range of caste titles, the interaction of the status hierarchy with the hamlet and temple systems adds yet another dimension of complexity. Hamlet "a" consists entirely of Brahmana and higher Satria people, including the ruling family, but some lesser Triwangsa belong to "b," "c", "d", and "e", mixed in among the Sudra. Hamlets "f", "g", and "h" are wholly Sudra, with "f" consisting of but a single dadia kin group, a rather uncommon occurrence. Caste affects temple organization too. In temple set I the death temple was until two years ago divided by a low wall; the Sudra organized their festival separately and held it on one side of the wall, the Triwangsa held theirs on the other. But this has been changed for reasons of economy and democracy, and now all worship together. Voluntary organizations, of which there are literally dozens, irrigation societies, two main ones being involved in this area, and some thirty or forty kin groups also complicate social relationships, though kinship is evidently less important here as an organizing force than in many other villages.

In such an admittedly extreme case of cross-cutting social groupings, the problem of integration, of mutual adjustments among the groups, is a very pressing one. At times open fights have broken out between leaders of various groups over the question of who had prior rights on the services of members common to them. Heavy concurrent demands often mean that work is only hastily done; when the slit gong is beaten to call together members of a given group, many people fail to appear because they either were too far away to hear the gong or thought that it was being sounded for another group to which they were not obligated. To rationalize this situation the Perbekel has instituted a monthly meeting of all important group leaders—fifty people or so—in which he tries valiantly to get them to coordinate their several efforts. He has also attempted to territorialize the system more by making hamlet and temple membership dependent on residence but, though he has had a little success in this direction, most of his efforts have been resisted by the villagers who, he claims, prefer things to be complicated. Despite the fact that he is the traditional ruler of the area, that he has been Perbekel for thirty years, and that he now has the whole Indonesian State behind him, he says that there is really very little he can do in reforming village institutions. People bow and act subservient, but they do just as they wish.

2. *Tihingan.* Although it lies only six miles or so east of Njalian, in the heart of the former kingdom of Klungkung, Tihingan differs from Njalian in most of its important features. Unlike Njalian, Tihingan has never been the seat of a lord, has relatively few Triwangsa and the Perbekel is a Sudra. Unlike Njalian, social affiliations, though complexly organized, are quite systematically integrated rather than randomly crosscutting. And unlike Njalian, there are within the perbekelan three definite spatial clusters of social loyalty to

9:Geertz E-5 (1957-1958)1959 OF7 Bali OF7

proverb.) Similarly, when a dadia is working at a temple festival, or whatever, the sub-dadia ties within the dadia are considered to have no reality and do not act as a basis for subgroup differentiation.

The second rule sets forth a hierarchy of precedence in which the needs of the hamlet outrank those of the dadia, those of the dadia outrank those of the sub-dadia, and those of the sub-dadia outrank those of voluntary groups. For example, if the hamlet as a whole wishes to harvest the fields of its members, then it has priority. The whole bandjar must harvest and does so as a group, with no internal differentiation. If the hamlet doesn't wish to harvest—per decision of the hamlet meeting—then the dadia have next rights, unaffiliated families either banding together or yielding their rights to one or another of the dadia. If the dadia also decides not to harvest, then the sub-dadia may; if the sub-dadia have no immediate needs then the task is surrendered to voluntary groups. The combination of these two rules of procedure—one prohibiting multiple bases of affiliation for a single task, one establishing an order of precedence—acts as a major integrative mechanism in this otherwise rather faction-prone village.

3. *Blaju.* Unlike Njalian, Blaju is not the name of a perbekelan, and unlike Tihingan, it is not the name of a fairly well defined village unit within a perbekelan. Rather, it is the name for a broadly defined region of about six square miles at the eastern edge of the Regency of Tabanan within which the influence of a particular ruling family was preponderant in the pre-Colonial period and to a great extent continues so today. As such, Blaju forms a minuscule state within a state, and its pattern of organization is characterized primarily by a stress on territoriality and caste (or title) as bases for social affiliation. Perhaps more than any other area of Bali, Blaju approaches the common stereotype of peasant social structure as being organized in terms of a pyramid of increasingly inclusive territorial units—barrios, villages, subdistricts, districts, and the like—each unit ruled by an attached political official of appropriate status. But, unfortunately for the sort of theory which would like to see in this system a survival of an "original" Balinese pattern from which all else could be adjudged a "deviation," this hierarchical territorialization is a quite recent phenomenon, occurring as a consciously motivated social innovation explicitly designed to intensify social integration.

The area commonly denominated as Blaju contains four perbekelan, three contiguous, one a kilometer or so to the north. The members of these four perbekelan—about 1500 kitchens—support a common set of Kahyangan-Tiga temples, a rather unusual circumstance, for commonly Kahyangan-Tiga congregations are usually smaller and are less extensive than a perbekelan. Within each of these perbekelan there are four hamlets, and each of these hamlets is further divided into from three to six territorial subunits called *kliran*. A kliran has arbitrarily fixed borders and each adult living within these borders is ipso facto a member of that kliran. It is the kliran, averaging eighteen to twenty kitchens, which performs most of the important day-to-day social functions, and it is the basic cooperative work unit in planting-harvesting, ritual, and the